

Serial No.: 09/029,579
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In the Claims:

Please amend claim 12, as follows. All pending claims, whether or not amended, are presented below for the Examiner's convenience and will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claims 1-6 and 8 (Cancelled).

7. (Previously amended) A composition for targeting double stranded nucleic acids, said composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier and an effective amount of a padlock probe oligonucleotide having two free nucleic acid end parts which are at least partially complementary to and capable of hybridizing with at least substantially neighboring respective regions of a double stranded target nucleic acid so that the padlock probe can be circularized by joining said free end parts to thereby catenate with the target sequence wherein said target sequence is directly inhibited.

9. (Previously amended) The composition according to Claim 7, further comprising a linking agent, wherein said linking agent is capable of joining said two free nucleic acid end parts.

10. (Previously amended) The composition according to Claim 9, wherein said linking agent is a ligase enzyme.

11. (Previously amended) The composition according to Claim 7, wherein said end parts further comprise a mutually chemically reactive compound.

12. (Currently Amended) The composition according to any one of Claims 7, 9, 10, or 11, ~~or 12~~, wherein said padlock probe comprises a non-natural nucleic acid or polymer.
